

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 18, 2018

Emily W. Murphy  
Administrator  
General Services Administration  
1800 F St. NW  
Washington, DC 20405

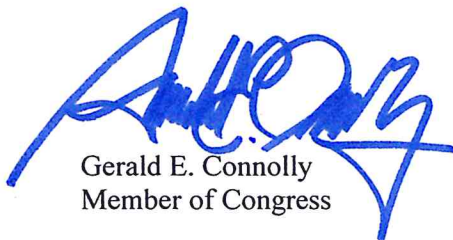
Dear Administrator Murphy:


We write to you regarding the status of the fourth hearing room at the Social Security Administration (SSA) Washington Hearing Office. It has come to our attention that the newly constructed hearing room, a project in which the General Services Administration (GSA) was involved, is not currently in use due to failed inspections. Despite assurances to the Administrative Law Judges in the Washington Hearing Office by SSA that outstanding construction and inspections would be completed by August 6, 2018, the hearing room is still unable to be used to conduct in person hearings. We are concerned that continued inattention to this matter will result in a waste of taxpayer dollars and increase wait times for Social Security recipients to receive a hearing and have their case processed.

The Social Security Administration's Washington Hearing Office serves residents in the Metropolitan Washington Region, including Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia. According to data published on SSA's website, the Washington Hearing Office has one of the longest wait times to process hearing requests and one of the longest average case processing times. The office ranks 120 out of 164 hearing offices in average processing time of hearing requests with citizens waiting an average of 655 days before their request is processed. In July 2018, residents who requested a hearing through the Washington Hearing Office must wait an average of 20 months from the date of their request until the date of their hearing. From data published by SSA, it is clear that residents serviced by the Washington Hearing Office prefer in person hearings to those held by video conference. Thus far, in FY2018, the Washington Hearing Office has held 1,745 in person hearings compared to 161 hearings held by video conference. Putting the fourth hearing room into use will allow the Washington Hearing Office to hold more in person hearings and speed up wait and processing times.

We would appreciate your immediate attention on this matter. Please respond by September 28, 2018 with an update on the status of the fourth hearing room in the Washington Hearing Office, including the current timeline for opening this hearing room for in person hearings, any steps GSA is taking to complete outstanding construction and inspections. An identical letter has been sent to the Social Security Administration.

Sincerely,

  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

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September 18, 2018

Nancy A. Berryhill  
Acting Commissioner  
Social Security Administration  
100 West High Rise  
6401 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21235

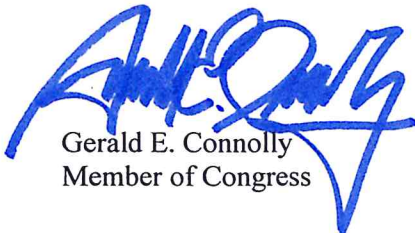
Dear Acting Commissioner Berryhill:


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